

Star-Songs *and* Atom-Dances

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WILLIAM EARL HILL



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STAR-SONGS AND ATOM-DANCES

BY
WILLIAM EARL HILL



BOSTON
THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY
1922

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The Four Seas Press
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

NOV -3 1922

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TO MY WIFE

*To him who seeks the living streams that flow
From out God's throne,
I would cry: Courage! Let him onward go
And not alone.
Let him have eyes of soul and sense that see
And ears that hear;
Let him love Truth with worship pure and free
From every fear.
Then whether he find God within the gloom
Of clouds and night,
His soul shall walk through fields where wonders
bloom,
Divine with light.*

INTRODUCTION

I would sing with the stars in their courses,
With the atoms that never will rest,
With the cells with their living forces,
With the Life that is Love's behest;
With the flowers and bees
And the blossoming trees
And the world He has made and blessed.

I would sing of man and his passions
That are bred in his human brain,
Of the womanly love that fashions
New child-souls for pleasure and pain,
Of the hero's heart
And the busy mart,
The sunshine of life and the rain.

And when I have sung all the stories
Of the wonderful creatures of earth,
Of the stars with their infinite glories,
Of love, of death, and of birth,
May we catch the shine
Of the vast Divine,
And sing of His love and worth!

STAR-SONGS AND ATOM-DANCES

The atoms are dancing, scientists say,
Ever dancing and whirling away;
In a labyrinthine maze they go
Like the darting, dancing blizzard-snow.
What is the tune to which they dance?
Music of God, or of circumstance,
Or the meaningless, foolish tune of chance?
Ears may not hear the tune that's played;
Eyes may not see the atom-glade
Where they dance in the mystic shade.

But this we know: they have danced all things,
They have danced the soul and the eagle's wings,
They have danced the golden nebulæ,
They have danced the stars that swing and die.
They have danced life in and danced life out,
Danced the victory and the rout,
Danced the heart and danced the brain,
Danced life's pleasure and its pain.
They have danced the infinite world we see.
They will dance through the far eternity.

The poets say that the stars that swing
Through their rhythmic orbits ever sing
With a song too grand for our mortal ears—
And sweet as the fall of the Infinite's tears.
Does the sun-star sing and softly croon
To its planet-offspring a lullaby tune?
Does the earth-star sing to its little moon?
Is all of the music the earth-star sings

The wonderful songs of its feathered things,
The thrush and starling and nightingale,
The meadow-lark and the running quail,—
And the songs of women and songs of men—
Songs of love and of laughter when
The heart beats high, and songs of death
Sung to the beat of failing breath,—
Songs of the wind and songs of the sea,
And the moaning song of the forest tree,
And the thunder's crash of artillery—
And the countless songs that men may hear
And understand with the fleshly ear—
Are these songs all of the songs earth sings
As she courses space with sun-bright wings?
Nay, the poets are right. There's a vaster song
With a melody sweet and divinely strong,
With a rhythmic beat a twelve-month long,
And diurnal overtones beating free
As Alleluias of ecstasy!
'Tis the tune to which ages march along—
Grand and infinite is her song!
Could we see the flash of the atom-wing,
Could we hear the songs that the great stars sing,
We would know that the infinite world is song—
A wonderful harmony beating strong,
With the stars to lead with a note as high
As the farthest reach of the starry sky,
And the atoms to chorus with voices still
Which ever swell and throb and thrill
Till God's whole universe grows to be
Formed and fashioned of melody!

Oh, my beloved one, would that we
Might sing and dance to this harmony!
But we miss the music and skip the beat,
And often we go with stumbling feet,
And the heart will faint and the courage quail,
And we call on strength without avail,
And we palter and doubt when we should see clear—
The stars and atoms we do not hear.
Let our hearts be lifted until we see
The words of the woven melody:
See the heart of each atom beating warm
With the love of each in the numberless swarm!
Hear them call like the beat of the wedding drums
While hastening each to his comrades comes,
Till their thickened swarmings come to be
The cosmical stars of infinity
That are held in their places lest they fall
By the love of each for the love of all.
See the atoms labor, never still,
And the molecules throb and pulse and thrill
With a labor of joy that must not die
Lest earth shall pass, and the infinite sky.
See them shift the shuttles of ceaseless change
That life may climb to a higher range.
Lo, the atoms and stars through the infinite day
Labor as blithely as birds at play
And build a new universe every day . . .
Now look with the heart again and see
Law and obedience ever free,
Unquestioning what the end may be
Of the Lawgiver hid in the mystery.
Never an atom may cross the line.

Graven upon his heart, the fine
Clear word of the Law is written clear
For each in the endless far and near.
Law is the gleam of the sunset's bars,
Law is the drive of the planet-cars,
And the whirl of the shining, flaming stars!
Love and Labor and Law are three
Words of the wonderful melody!
Love and Labor and Law rule all—
Ever the atoms at their call
Build the infinite-great from the infinite-small.
May they rule, my love, your heart and mine—
The heart of the universe is divine!

Let us list as the soundless songs draw nigh
That the whole vast universe dances by.
For we only guess at a passing word
Of the massive volumes unseen, unheard.
Perchance the atom and star and sod
Sing their grandest song in the one word: "God"!

LOVE AND THE COSMOS

When was the birth of Love, my love?
Ere the birth of the first flaming sun—
When fire and dew
And I and you
And the tiger and rose were one;

Ere the infinite points of the ether's force
Loved with a flaming desire,
And electrons whirled
Through the infinite world
From the womb of their passionate fire;

Ere electrons were wedded each to each
And the atoms came to be—
And each one's fate
Was to seek his mate
Through the far eternity;

Ere the atoms wedded in molecules
And the molecules colloids bore;
When the first life spark
Cleaved the waters dark,
Love had lived countless æons before.

Then ever the loving and loved, my love,
Were wedded through æons of time,
And life climbed on
From its earliest dawn
Till it reached the heights sublime.

From the two who were wedded in Love, my love,
Love fashioned a better one,
Till the monad grew
A mind that flew
Through space to the farthest sun;

Till the primal slime-life grew, my love,
To a rose, to a heart that is true,
To tree and dove,
To a mother's love,
To the love and the soul of you!

And ever to aid in the upward climb,
Love summons the King of the Grave,
To break the old
For the better mold,
For Death is but Love's good slave!

And where is the realm over which he reigns,
King Love with his royal robes?
He blesses and fills
All the life that spills
Through a thousand million globes!

Love's furnaces fashioned the nebulæ.
Love sang from the flaming spheres.
And the cosmos came
From passion's flame
At the birth of the infinite years!

And there is no death of Love, my love!
Love, Creator and Cause, cannot die;
For the blue grown black
With dead sun's wrack
Flames again in fierce nebulæ!

THE BOULDER OF GNEISS

A fragment of Archæan earth I stand—
As through the vast millenniums of the past—
Unchanged, unchanging. Fields of clay and sand
Were once my brother rocks; now forests vast
And flowery meadows bloom upon the land
Built from their ashes:—I alone stand fast.

Emotionless I stood while passed away
Vast lands and seas, while mountain ranges sank,
While shrank the sun, and earth grew cold and gray,
While the moon froze, and while earth's fountains
 drank
The light from new stars when the old gave way
And o'er Time's brink in frozen darkness sank.

Life came to earth; but not for me the dawn
When God breathed life upon the neighbor sea.
I blindly saw that changing life as on
And up from slime it climbed to beast and tree.
Dumbly I glimpsed Man's rise—long æons gone—
Then watched unmoved his timeless destiny.

Symbol of changelessness I stand. But Time,
All conquering, some far day shall set me free!
What mightier, nobler man with soul sublime
Formed then from out my soul may rise and see
What strange new rose in what a lovelier clime,
Apotheosis of the heart of me!

THE SONG OF THE SPECTROSCOPE

You ravel the strands of heaven-sent light
With mystic, alchemical arts
Till the rainbow ribbon lies where white
Beamed the points of the star-light's darts;
For never the whole of the ray of night
Can equal the sum of its parts.

So you lay in their places the ruby light,
The gold, the green, and the blue,
With a warp of lines that are dark and bright—
For the fabric of rainbow hue—
That tell that the flaming star of night
Is one with the dust and dew,

For the mind of man in your marvellous car
May travel the boundless space
And prove that the self-same atoms are
Diffused through the infinite place
As the old and new and the near and far
Are ruled by One Love and Grace.

PSYCHOLOGY

I

There are gardens of mystical beauty
Where fountains like flowers unfold;
There are temples to Love and Duty
That are built out of glass and gold;
There are cities where priceless booty
Is ever made manifold.

There are plains that are wide and lonely
Where the winds ever surge and sweep;
There are seas that are bounded only
By the bounds of God's mightiest deep;
There are mountain peaks that lonely
O'er the plains their vigils keep.

There's the sea—and land-life round us—
The dumb and the singing ones:
There are cloudy skies that bound us
On the trail where the earth-star runs;
And over, beneath, and around us
Are planets and infinite suns.

II

These are only the first few pages
Of the mystical book of gold.
Let us read then the lore of the sages,
Seers, poets, philosophers old.
Ah! what is the lore of the ages
To the pages yet untold!

III

There are stranger seas in the darkness,
Sunless and dark and blind,
Seas that are hid neath the ocean's lid,
Dark as the seas of mind,
Sunless seas of idiocies
That we tremble with horror to find.

There are flaming lands neath the crust of earth
Dim-glimpsed through the scoriac flood,
Like sinister seas of passions that seize
And master the living blood—
Passions that new with the man-soul grew
As it formed from the slime and the mud.

And on through the universes,
Past the uttermost star we find,
Past where we grope with the telescope
To discover what lies behind,
Is a blind and soundless universe, boundless
And infinite as mind.

THE SONG OF MACHINERY

Earth that we know as a flying star,
Hiding in its embrace
Infinite worlds of mind that far
Transcend material space,
Is but a froth-flake on seas afar
That flow through the infinite place.

But yet in the bounds of our little Earth
Are wonderful things to see;
Here where nights, days, years, have birth
Through a finite infinity:
The passing show and the deeper worth
Of the spirit's mystery.

And I love the arts and the mystery
Of the things that we may not know,
The thoughts sublime of the men who see
The God in the passing show;
But I, also, love the enginery
Of the minds of creative glow.

For these build palaces fairer to see
Than Tennyson's dream of art;
Their towers make Babel seem to be
But a very tiny part;
Their magical carpets sail swift and free
Where east winds eternally start.

There are cities fairer than fabled Jinn
Could create, with his magic power;

There are wonder-machines wherewith men win
Luxury's fairest flower,
And the lightning spark man dares to win
To speak round the earth with power.

There are poison gases and searing flame
And the mighty cannon's din;
For man's heart speaks the Ineffable name
But mingled with shame and with sin.
Ah! when will man put away his shame
And the golden age begin?

And over and under the land and sea
(Seven-league boots are too slow)
Man roams with his enginery swift and free
As the bolts from Apollo's bow;
He has chained the atoms he cannot see
And harnessed Niagara's flow.

The land is plowed and the grain brought in,
There are tidings of woe and of weal;
And the man-of-war and the needle and pin,
And the plate of the daily meal,
And the leisure and wealth that men may win,
Come from monsters of flame and steel.

Men have climbed to the stars on the rays of light
And weighed them one by one,
Named the atoms in all the orbs of night
And measured the courses they run;
Yet the tale of the minds of the men of might
Is hardly as yet begun.

For man is the image, so small but clear,
Of the Chemist of mind and of wing,
The First, the Original Engineer,
Whose wheels are the planets that swing
Round the axle-suns of the Far-and-Near
To fashion the spirit's wing.

TEACH US THY LAWS (1917)

Lord of the Book and Scales, whose fiery sword
Doth execute Thine everlasting Laws,
Teach us to know and understand Thy Word
And make us fit to conquer in Thy cause.
Help us to know Thy law and to obey,
Lest we be vanquished—lest our land decay.

From everlasting that is past and gone
To everlasting that is yet to be,
From chaos to the Judgment Day's red dawn,
Eternities and Times are under Thee.
Thou rulest them by changeless Laws; and all,
Princes and peoples, disobeying, fall.

The wrecks along the shores of ages past
Bear witness: low they moulder to decay.
Nor Babylon so rich nor Rome so vast
Nor glorious Greece nor Macedon could stay.
Where Eden's Garden made earth's Paradise,
The lizard creeps beneath the desert's skies.

Thy law weds righteousness with strength; for Thee
We battle 'gainst the hordes of crime and lust;
We bear the cross to make all people free;
"Thrice armed is he that hath his quarrel just."
And yet though we be trebly armed, the foe
Must conquer if we do not strike the blow.

For crass Indifference and Divided Will,
The Dream of poets unfulfilled by deed,
The Good Intention, Indolence can kill,

The Luxury that scorns its country's need,
The blameless life that's lived for self alone—
These hurl the proudest nation from her throne.

The empty patriot boast, the panic fear—
Fanatic zeal for other righteous need
That recks not of our country's danger near—
Blind Trust—the faith unquickened by strong deed—
And flabbiness of body, mind, and will—
These are the foes that mangle, maim, and kill.

These are the traitors in our camp today:
Blood-spattered profiteer and useless shirk,
The idler dallying down the primrose way,
The unjust striker, wealth that does no work.
Lord, bind the loosened cables of our will
To live Thy law and do Thy mandates still.

Lord, we have sinned against Thy holy Law
And kept us lapped in lazy dreams of peace
While years rolled on when every moment saw
Æons of agony without surcease:
Thy holy peoples victim to the Hun!
Thy seas defiled, Thy streams with carnage run!

We heeded not Thy wondrous shrines defaced—
We saw unmoved Thy tortured children die—
We raised no hand for Innocence debased—
We heard unmoved the murdered millions' cry.
Now let us heed at last Thy sacred word:
"Thou art thy brother's keeper," saith the Lord!

Just are Thy laws and holy evermore,
And for each moment of our weak delay
Thou hast allotted unto us the score
And with our blood and treasure we must pay.
So let it be. For Justice is Thy name:
We are not blameless—let us bear our blame.

Then, though we bear our burden to the goal
Through bitter nights of agony and woe,
The seeds of Self and Sloth torn from the soul,
From strength to greater strength Thy people go.
The stroke of war shall wound us but to heal
And change our weakness into heart of steel.

THE ROSE

Only the God that made her knows
The beauty of the dew-drenched rose:

Petals like lovelight shining through
And heart distilling honey dew;

Fragrant as breath of beauteous maid
When Love's hand on her heart is laid;

Colors as rich as tropic dawn
Filched from the heavens to grace the lawn;

Thorns that are formed to pierce and tear
Beautiful blooms that cry: "Beware!"

Rose, you are song of wondrous power;
My song must envy your beauty's power.

You harness sunbeams your work to do;
You feed on breeze and dust and dew.

Rose, you are queen of those who give
The primal life to all that live.

How have you kept the mystic power
Of changing dust to living flower

While I have lost, vast æons long,
Your power to change the dust to song?

Had you lost and had I kept,
You might be poet more adept,

I might be less beauteous, rose.
How it happened so, who knows?

Some little chance through the ages vast
Created us man and rose at last.

Both are a part of chaos whirled
From God's great hand to make a world.

More, life is one on blossoming Earth:
Come from a common, mystic birth;

For that which poet in transport knew,
Calm-browed Science admits is true:

I am one with the blossoming rose,
With beast that prowls and flower that blows,

With each man, woman, boy, and girl
In the primal protoplasmic swirl;

One with Homer's heaven-strung lyre,
One with the life of sea and mire;

One with Egypt's great white queen;
One with the asp on her bosom's sheen;

One with Pilate, Judas, Christ,
And them, who for his vestments diced;

I am one with ravening maw,
Flower and leaf and tooth and claw ;

One with each tear and moan of pain,
With mirth and laughter, joy and gain ;

With all men doubted, thought, believed,
Feared, suffered, hoped for, and conceived.

More, I am one with near and far,
With rippling rill and burning star,

With more than ever man believed—
With all the vastness unconceived—

With all that was, is, and shall be
Throughout the far eternity !

In my soul and body dwell
Life and Death and Heaven and Hell !

Rose, you are I and I am you—
One with more than God e'er knew !

One from chaos and God's breath ;
One 'neath laws of Love and Death.

Love has built from chaos, Day ;
Death the outworn takes away.

Love, Creator, hovers o'er
Star and rose and ocean shore,

Forms what was, what lies before—
Mist-hid lands we may not explore.

God, creative, lives within
Chaos-mist, and mind and sin,

In the river's ripple flows,
In volcanic fires glows,

Lives within the saint's repose,
Glows in beauty from the rose.

God is Love and Love is God—
Through and beyond all He has trod.

Rose, you and I are a tiny part
Out of His throbbing, pulsing heart!

* * * *

Only the God who made you knows
Your vast, far glory of a rose!

ODE TO BEAUTY

God feeds the soul with Beauty! Morning stars
Shake out white joy where purple skies enfold;
Through trees of song gleam minarets and spars
Of dawn-dreamed cities, ivory, rose, and gold.

And sweet with melancholy falls the light
Of rainbow sunset-clouds on fields of snow
When cotton-woods stand black against the white
Like gallows-trees within the afterglow.

Oh, happy is flower-decked Summer, green and gold,
Brave Winter's diamond-dazzling dress and hair,
Rich Autumn's royal purple robes, and bold
Young Spring with fragrant breath that fills the air.

There is a beauty in each leaf and flower;
In wild beast's prowl, a fierce and savage grace;
The steed's swift flight is full of virile power;
A faery Earth looks to the Moon's white face.

And earth is filled with melody of song:
The carolling of birds within the trees,
The thunder's peal, the surf that howls along
The rocky coast, wind-moan and buzz of bees.

The storm-scarred cliffs, the cataract foaming high,
Are Beauty in excess. The sea when storm
Lashes its billows to assault the sky
Is beautiful as some white hero-form

Etched by the lightning on a Hell of black
And shakes the heart like drums. The waving corn,
The blossoming apple-trees, the river's track
Of silver,—these of Goddess Peace are born

And bring her joy. Fair is the prattling child;
Fair, youth and maid when the world's heart is riven
By Love's white, blinding flash; and mother mild,
And manhood's strength for the world's service given;

Beauty is Love! Love, Beauty! Harmony
Beats through the world from one vast chaos swirled.
We are the stuff of all we know and see—
Man, rose, and sea; atom and starry world!

Unnumbered years have passed since first man saw
Beauties of earth and strove to catch and save
Them from destruction under Time's fierce claw
By scratching them on wall of rocky cave

Or carving with rude scraps of splintered flint
Upon the handle of his spear. The dull,
First light of human history is the glint
That tells us man loved then the beautiful.

Why should he not? From chaos, dust, and dew,
And flaming love of God, the world and man
And all that is, were formed together through
The long unnumbered ages of His plan

And grew to soul and spirit and the power
Of Beauty, side by side, each meet to be
That which completes the other, and the flower
Of God's creation is their unity.

God feeds the soul with Beauty; night and morn,
Noon and the touch of evening twilight fall
With benediction on the spirit born
With eyes that see the beauteous soul of all.

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER

The mountain rises from the grassy plain,
His snowy armor splendid as the sun,
And o'er his head the cloudy banners run
Lacy and quivering in the airy main;

And all the human-wrought magnificence
Of the great city at the mountain's feet
Seems but the tinkling bells and tinsel meet
To ornament his sandals . . . Eloquence

Of poetry and fair memorial high
Are man-made like the city; but the soul
Is God-made like the mountain—God's great scroll
Whereon he graves the beauty of the sky.

And though I sang as to a seraph's lyre,
My verse were tinkling cymbal to the life
That he I loved has borne through all the strife
With evil like a white sword tipped with fire!

For here my father met and conquered Death
And strode from out the tenements of pain
Into the realm of his eternal gain
Free from the torture and the stabbing breath.

And if he felt one wish that he might stay,
It was that he might clasp the hands again
Of those he loved and know they loved him when
The Spectral Terror clanged the end of day.

So much his life had known of pain and ill!
So often was his body crucified!
So many a fond unselfish hope has died,
So few the great desires would Fate fulfill!

Yet he has never faltered on the way.
The voice of Conscience was the voice of God,
And with a soul unconquerable he trod
The thorny paths and bore the burdened day.

And he was not unhappy, for the wings
Of shining Love were wrapped about his life:
The love of friends, of children and of wife,
And the great love of God that throbs and sings

Round godly lives; and oft his soul could meet
And rise above the tortures of the flesh
And tread the disappointments and the mesh
Of worldly troubles underneath his feet

And gaze on God, and eat of food divine.
Ah! think you that the Christ in agony
Was all unhappy? Nay, his eyes could see
The holy city and could not repine.

But willingly and of His choice he bore
The heartbreak and the stabbing of the breath
To hold inviolate, through shameful death,
The purpose of His soul, immortal fair.

And though my father was but man, he saw
As in a glass, within the Heavenly place,
His maker and his Master face to face;
And he was not afraid who kept God's law.

Why should he fear! From earliest youth to age,
With conscience flaming like a fiery cloud,
With honor unto base things never bowed,
He wrote true things on an unsullied page.

So Joy walked with him in the morning light,
And Love made temperate the heated day;
And oh! the glory of the light that lay
About his head when twilight drew to night!

What though the inexorable sword of Fate
Barred to his feet the shining peaks of Fame,
And Wealth's voluptuous stream where flowers flame,
And Erudition's land where sages wait:

In greater lands than these, he built his throne—
The kingdom of the deathless human soul
Where conscience, duty, righteousness control
With the heart's greed for evil overthrown.

The storms that beat upon the mighty oak
But knit more firmly still his rooted might;
The steel that makes the sword must feed the spite
Of flame and grinding stone and clanging stroke.

God stripped his life of tinsel and He tried
His soul with storm and fire and staggering blows.
We looked and lo! his naked soul arose,
Unconquerable manhood, purified,

Made fit to dwell in realms of light above—
"The measure of an angel—of a man!"
The world is better for the race he ran!
He wakes within the City of God's Love.

THE BOASTERS

THE SAILOR SPEAKS:

I have steered my barque 'neath the Southern Cross;
I have sailed neath the Northern Star;
I have seen God's smile on the tropic isle
And the glacial lands afar.
I have ridden the waves in the deep sea-caves
Where the pearls and coral lie,
And the mosque gongs rang on the shores of Hwang
As my sleepy junk sailed by.
I have seen the dawn on the Amazon
And listened to Memnon's tone,
And, a castaway, I have found a way
From an island forlorn and lone.
Oh, what more gay than to sail away
To the shores of an unknown sod!
What greater way may a man's feet stray
Than the way my feet have trod!

THE SCIENTIST SPEAKS:

I have seen the swirl of the chaos-whirl
As it fashioned the nebulae;
I have seen the flame of the suns that came—
I have seen them fade and die.
I have seen the flash of the planet's dash
Through the steam that hemmed it round.
I have seen it cool to the ocean pool
And the rivers and solid ground.
I have weighed the sun and the stars, each one,
In a tiny but perfect scale.
I have seen the forms of the life that swarms
In a drop from the stagnant swale.
I have seen the prance of the atom-dance

In the farthest distant stars,
And I whiled away a night and day
In a house with the men of Mars.
I have ridden the tides of the life that rides
Through the infinite day and night,
Things past and gone and the coming dawn
I can see 'neath my study-light.

THE POET SPEAKS:

Have you measured the flight of a seer's sight
Or the height of a hero's heart?
Have you weighed the grace of a little child's face
Ere sin and its sorrow start?
Have you plumbed deep sin and the strength to win
From under its crushing weight?
And why do men fall beyond recall
At the hest of an unkind Fate?
Have you measured the flight of the rays of light
From a humbly spoken prayer,
Or plumbed with your art a mother's heart
And measured the love that's there?
Can you weight each part of the human heart
In its workaday sunshine and rain—
Bold, sad, or afraid—have you measured and weighed
Its joy and its sorrow and pain?
Oh, who of us knows how fair is a rose,
Or the rainbow that shines in a storm,
Or the music that dwells in the chime of bells?
Who can tell the creation's form?
For the things we show are the things men know,
The things they can understand;
But there comes a place that we cannot trace—
Dim lines of a mystic land!

Do we see the whole or is there a soul
In the body of things we see—
A soul of love, in, 'round, above,
The heart of the mystery!

THE LOVER SPEAKS :

Your accents roll like a far bell's toll
Into the depths of my heart and soul.
Sweet are the things that the good earth brings—
Grand are the star and the song it sings.
Sweet is the prayer of the maiden fair
And the hero's heart that is worshipped there.
If that heart seems far from the fair, far star—
From the purple tide on the coral bar,
Yet it is not so—they gleam and glow,
All of the things that we see and know—
With the selfsame light and the beauty rare
That makes all bright that is bright and fair.
Love was the light that shone so bright
That it shattered the gloom of the chaos-night.
Love formed the tree and the bird and bee,
The rose's blush and the restless sea,
And love is the art of the human heart
That alone can teach us the better part.
Whether or not the human thought
Can pierce through the veil to a God above;
Call it God or chance or an atom-dance,
The All-Creator is naught but Love.
Sweet are the things that the earth-love brings.
Love is the song that the star-choir sings.
Love is the prayer of the maiden fair
And the joy and wonder that pulses there,
And love is the greatest of all great things
And the soul of all that's fair!

TIME

Lo, giant Time is king of all we know,
And with celestial clouds apparelled bright
Rides from the dim, gray void of chaos-night
From out the endless land of Long-Ago.
Chaotic nebulae, and flaming suns,
And worlds that swing and cool and bring forth life,—
Which after millions of long years of strife
Is Man that writes Time's story as it runs—
All these are painted on Time's rainbow clouds,
The picture of a story infinite
Of all that men have been and yet may be.
The things that were but are not, he enshrouds
In flames magnificent, by which is lit
The glory of the coming mystery.

SPACE

How are our lives all broidered with the sun,
Moon and the glory of uncounted spheres,
Until the eye grows dim with awe-struck tears
Before the vast immensity and the One
Who did create all things. But when we find
Within the water-drop's confining wall,
The worlds of life infinitesimal
With powers unknowable by human mind—
Our hearts beat high to know His power who made
The atom and the space that rings us round
Unto the farthest star and onward still!
How infinite the scene wherein is laid
Man's story! How His hand our lives has bound
In the majestic beauty of His will!

PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH

Out of the dark and the night we fare—
Into the night we go;
Shall we see the gleam of the bright stars there?
Shall we sleep through the star-light's glow?
Shall we enter in at the portals where
Lie the cities of dreadful woe?

If we leave the day for the peace of night
And sleep while the planet swings,
While dead suns crash with a lurid light
And nebulae new take wings,
While suns grow black that are flaming white
And the Lord new suns forth flings;

While the earth shall die and new earths be
And the finite infinite
Shall change to a new infinity
By new God's-lanterns lit,
Where the spheres shall sing a new melody
For heavenly ears more fit:

Then the fool may weep and the coward moan
That our finite lives below
May never encompass an infinite throne
All bright with eternity's glow;
But let *us* give thanks for the suns that have shone,
For dawns and the roses that blow;

For bowery vales where the sunlight drifts
Through the green lace overhead;

For the brook whereto through white cloud-rifts
Is the silvery moonlight fed;
For the rocky, snow-capped mount that lifts
To the cloudy skies his head;

For desert and hamlet and heaving sea;
For the fields of the wheat and corn;
For the song of the wind and the bird and bee,
And the Springtime's bloom-wreathed horn;
For the plain's God-haunted immensity
Where the starlight's song is born;

For the din and strife of the city streets
Where the music of labor sings,
Where the might of men ever throbs and beats
Like a soul with imprisoned wings,
For the homes where the homing loved one greets
His loved where the love-flower springs;

For light and labor and life and love;
For the poet's sacred fire;
For the heart and spirit that soars above
Till it hears the celestial choir
And brings to earth of the angels' love
And the Infinite's desire;

For the dreams that come and the thoughts that fly
To the far creation's verge;
For the veiled desires that hasten by;
For the hopes that burn and urge;
For the aspirations flaming high
And the changes that ebb and surge;

For the songs imprisoned in chiseled stone
Or snared on the canvas white
Or printed fair on the paper alone,
All the magical words of light
That the seers of all the ages have known
And rescued from Time's swift flight;

For the barbs of pain and sorrow that bring
The courage and strength to bear
That makes a blessing their bitter sting
While even they rankle there;
For the power of sympathy they bring
For another's bitter care;

Since joy and gladness and pain and woe
And the checkered shade and light
Are the food of the soul by which we grow
To a grander and better height,
And the world were grown but a tawdry show
Should everything bring delight;

Aye, rather give thanks for the chance to aid
In the storms that ever sweep
The head that in sorrow's bed is laid,
The eyes that are forced to weep,
The soul which some ugly sin has flayed
And the heart no joy makes leap!

Give thanks for a part in the infinite plan
Through the endless æons that flows,
That out of the primal slime raised man
With a soul that throbs and glows,

With a mind that leaps space's farthest span
And a heart for another's woes;

And shall still raise man through the years to be
To a purer and better clime
Where the shackles fall and the soul is free
And is raised to the heights sublime
Whose limits are naught but infinity
Encompassed in infinite time;

Give thanks that we all on this upward way
May aid in this work divine
By the acts we do and the words we say
And the thoughts that are yours and mine
Of lifting the race from the earthly clay
Nearer to the divine!

For naught is lost, of better or worse,
And the deeds of our life on earth
Shall live in new lives to bless or curse
Till a newer world sees birth.
Though as grain of sand to the universe
Are our little deeds on earth:

Yet each is a part of the race of man
Which runs through the ages to be
Toward the hour of a vast perfection when
The things which are mystery
Shall be transcribed by the flaming pen
Of omniscient divinity,

And all that is power in body and soul
Shall live how often again

In the rose that blooms—in the thoughts that roll
From the seer's and the poet's pen—
In the million forms of life whose goal
Is a height beyond our ken.

Give thanks for the marvellous living clay,
Give thanks for the living soul.
That is richer than all of the orbs of day,
That makes and completes the whole,
That changes dumb chaos to heavenly ray
And fashions the sky's bright bowl . . .

So if the soul should awake and keep
Eternity with the blest,
Or if we should pass to eternal sleep
In the realms of a quiet rest,
Yet we shall know that the Lord will keep
Our souls in the way that is best.

And though we should live in the realms accursed
By the streams of eternal woe,
We can bear the torture and even the worst
That men and that Gods may know:
On the soul immortal new powers shall burst
From bearing an infinite woe,

Till the pain shall become as a little thing,
And the Hell shall become a home;
Till the spirit in darkness shall take wing
Or shall will no more to roam;
Till use and habit shall pleasure bring
And Hell be a Heavenly home.

THE WOMAN MATERNAL

I

Heart of the world's desire,
Angel and human beast,
Cruel as ravening fire,
Houri and Rose of the East;

Serpent and mystical dove,
Slayer and martyred one,
Muse and the Muse's love,
Harlot and sybil and nun;

Valkyr of sword and flame,
Venus with love's nectar cup,
Mother of Him who came
For our sins to be lifted up;

Ever upon your brow—
E'en though you cast it down—
Glimmers and gleams though it be but in dreams,
God-given motherhood's crown.

Out of His infinite heart,
White with Creation's desire,
God has divided a part,
Filling your being with fire.

Waters of Time ever roll;
Ages encompass God's plan,
Forming you body and soul,
Maker, conservator of man.

II

This is the tool that he used,
Love of the cell for the cell,
From the spark in the slime to the heights sublime
Building life surely and well.

Monad and hydra and fish,
Reptile and mammal and man,
Follow the Infinite's wish,
Carry Divinity's plan.

Roses that bloom from the mire,
Wheat and the cottonwood-tree,
Mosses and ferns house the fire
Lent by the Deity.

Numberless lives from the cell,
Never are two the same;
Ever the best, forsaking the rest,
Fashion the fairer flame.

Ever the poor and the weak
Pass to the impotent grave—
Terrible Death becomes meek:
Love holds him shackled, a slave!

Love, the Creator divine,
Building a man from the mire,
From the lower life and its surging strife
Fashions a spirit-fire;

Plants in the human heart
Love like a mystic vine

Part of the earth and part
Selfless and near divine.

You are the mother of men,
You are God's partner true,
God's millions of years you balance with tear
And the agonized rapture of you!

III

Not for the life that you bring—
Earth's tide of life ever rolls—
This be the glory you sing:
Builders are you of men's souls,

Infinite spirits and true
Built in God's mystical plan,
Daughters and sons to be mightier ones
Lifting the races of man.

You are the current that flows
On to an earth more divine,
Far to an earth wherein glows
Love's most ineffable sign.

IV

Star of all men's desire,
Rose of Love's beautiful earth,
Bearer of life's sacred fire,
Goddess of mystical birth—

God writes with flaming pen:
Holy the path you have trod!
You are the mother of men,
You are the partner of God!

MYOPIA

Our eyes are myopic: they do not see
Beyond the fact the reality,
Beyond the shadow the shining light,
The stars of dawn through the darkened night.
Men sell their souls for a golden prize
And bolster their fame with boasting lies,
And throw the eternal jewels away
For the gauds of fame and success that aye
Shall wither and darken within the day.

For fame and power and luxury
Are pleasant things when they come to be
As the great reward for a service great
And are used to lift up man and state;
But they poison the soul to a bitter dust
If built from the hemlock of things unjust
Or used as a car whereon to ride
The spectacle to behold in pride
Of some man of sorrows crucified.

Oh, not from fame and wealth the birth
Of the poet's joy in the blossoming earth
Or the heart of love or the wild bird's song
Or the conscience clean and the manhood strong.
Earth blooms for all and the restless sky;
Death's dart pierces the low and high.
Greater than gold or palace of art
Is God's great jewel, the human heart,
And the spirit of man is the priceless part.

Tinsel and glitter and tawdry show,
But little of beauty his heart may know,
Who does not act in the living truth
That the stainless soul and the heart of ruth
Are jewels enchanted that God has given
To raise us up from the dust toward Heaven;
That the world pays not for the body slain,
But death of body and all of pain
To save the soul is supremest gain.

And the time will come when these truths shall sway
All men as a matter of everyday;
Labor's pride be to serve, not gain,
God's of Mammon and self be slain,
Art and Science and Enginery
And the palace of wealth will come to be—
Together with all men's minds may teach—
The blessing of all and the wealth of each.
Gold will be prized for the good it brings,
Men will be men, not slaves and kings,
And peace cover earth with her angel-wings.

For out of the dust of the chaos-night,
Shall bloom in those golden ages, light;
Out of the blind will come to be
Eyes that may see more perfectly;
Born from the womb of the dumb and dark
Be thunder's music and song of lark;
And up from the æons be building still
Rich chambers of mind, strong castles of will,
And temples of soul on a Heaven-kissed hill.

THE WORLD WHERE WE LIVE IS A
FRAGRANT STAR

The earth today is a fragrant star,
And it tilts and whirls its way
Where the appleblossoms' musk is drifting far
With the scent of the flowers of blossoming May
'Neath the flame of the sun's bright bar.

The world where we live is a flying star,
And the path where its course is laid
Blossoms with light from the flames afar
Of the night-bloomed suns that die and fade
When the near star's dawnings are.

The world where we live is a falling star.
Through the far blue heavens it falls:
If it misses the sun it shoots afar
Through the ether crash where the silence calls
Three years of the lunar star.

The world where we live is a singing star:
In eloquent silence it sings
Of the Power that on through the deeps afar
In the numberless stars of the Heavens swings—
For each is His shining car!

EVOLUTION

There is a power that works throughout the World;
Its other self is Love. .
It built from chaos stars and worlds, and hurled
Them through the blue above.

Beneath its laws the atoms came to be,
From atoms, primal life;
From primal life, it fashioned you and me
Through age-long upward strife.

Its law is this: from low shall grow the great,
The precious from less worth,
From savage tribe at last a perfect state;
Its slaves are Death and Birth.

To every universe its powers extend
Of matter, mind, and soul.
Throughout eternity its constant end
Divine Perfection's goal.

It forms the beauties of the Infinites
As roses from the clod.
Look to the throne where the All-Father sits!—
It is a part of God!

ANY MAN

Dew and the dust of the diamond,
The breath of the billowing breeze,
And the things men mine by the torches' shine
Neath the beds of the vanished seas—
All bound by the strong, bright sunlight's thong—
You are these—yet more than these.

A drop in the fathomless ocean
Of Time and Circumstance—
A viewless space mid the human race—
A cell-and-atoms dance—
Sap-drip as we of Igdrasil's tree
And a victim of change and chance.

Yet a part of the great Creator—
A dream of the life divine,
By human love and the Love above
Created wherein entwine
The vines of the lust of our mortal dust
With the tree of life divine.

A part of the primal life-cell
That God, in the long ago,
When the Earth was young and the skies were hung
With nebulous suns and low,
Formed from a dream and cast in the stream
Of the waters that ebb and flow;

That like to its Maker, immortal,
Has grown and multiplied

With a living birth that filled the earth
And the waters deep and wide
With a strange new life where Love and Strife
On a throne rule side by side;

That blooms in the wheat and roses,
And in every living thing,
And through forms that were fair and foul and rare
In an endless flux and swing,
In the ages past emerged at last
In man and the soul awing;

And deep in your soul implanted
Grows the seed of the thing sublime
That has blessed all life with its war and strife
Through every age of time:
The primal surge of the upward urge
That has raised man from the slime.

A little bit of the angel
That man may someday be
But with cells colloid like the anthropoid
And a brain wherein cruelty
May chance to dwell as within the cell
Of the fish man used to be;

A little way-station only
On the ever-upward way
That man shall tread till the sun be dead
And a newer sun hold sway
O'er a newer Earth of a better birth
In a freer, brighter day.

Heir of unnumbered ages,
What may we pray for you?
The primal surge of the upward urge
That makes e'en the lowest life true;
A Homeric mind and a heart as kind
As the Christ, and as pure as the dew;

A mind that may climb the star-beams
And a heart for love and woe;
A soul that glows with the light that flows
From the throne that is white as snow;
And a will to seek for the highest peak
That the life of man may know.

THE NEW-BORN

Beautiful bloom of Love's beautiful tree,
Poem conceived in an ecstasy—
Oh, the wonderful artisans, Passion and Joy,
Have builded a baby-boy!

Down in the depths of a dumb, blind sea,
There they have fashioned him tenderly.
Like a passion flower on the shore above,
Bloomed the passionate, guarding heart of love.
Swiftly they built from the tiny cell
Beautiful chambers where Thought shall dwell,
Violet crystals that make and see
Earth and the stars of infinity;
Dugged him a well whence a ruby flow
Ever within and around shall go—
Ever around and in and out
Goes the mystical river that flows thereout—
Delicate shells they formed where grow
All of the music that life may know;
Hands that are grasping and feet that shall flee
Far, let us hope, from the blasphemous tree;
Marvellous chemical crucible
Changing the ugly to beautiful,
Changing the dead to the living fire
Of joy and pain, of thought and desire;
Over and through and around the whole,
They fashioned a living soul.

All of the life of the earth that has passed
Brings you to earth at last.

There on the shores of the mystical sea
You have lived the ages that used to be
Since the life of the earth first came to be.
Vast are the ages that passed away
From sun to sun of your yesterday;
Infinite ages of love and strife
Passed in the nine moons of your life
While slowly up from the primal slime
Climbed through the æons of æons of time
Life till it reached the heights sublime
Of a human soul that may know and love
And worship the God above.

Happy and great may thy future be!
Out from the wonderful, mystic sea
You have launched on yet vaster a mystery.
Lo, the dumb silence struck through with your cry!
Blindness is pierced by the light of your eye!
Stricken away all the memories past,
Into the future you're gliding fast,
Sunshine and cloud and the tempest blast.
Out of the darkness and into the day,
Such be your life for aye.
Sleep then and rest on a soft, bright breast,
God grant you that which is best.

Flower and fruit of Love's fair tree,
Song of the angels of ecstasy—
Was it Love and Passion and Life and Joy—
Or God—created you, baby-boy?



WHY?

Earth is a slave, ever whirling, rushing
On its ceaseless, infinite round after round,
Dancing on through the silence hushing
Every chord of its starry sound.

Time is a river, a rushing river—
Never a drop of its waters still—
Flowing on, endlessly on, to the Giver
Who giveth the things that have been and will.

Spirit is Lord of the universes.
Earth and the Heavens before it bow.
Rushing Time its flowing reverses,
Till past is future and then is now.

Yet in the midst of the infinite flowing
Unconcernedly turning away
From the fathomless things, we seek unknowing
Only the sordidness day after day.

THE SAND HILLS

This is the sand hill country,
Where the prairie chickens whirr,
Where the coyote wails from the hills and swales—
The land of the cactus burr,
With blowouts—pits where the lizard flits
And rattlesnakes strike and stir.

This is the sand hill country.
It was formed from an ocean floor
At the Rockies' birth when the crust of earth
Was crumpled, and the core
Of liquid fire pushed high and higher
Till it reached to Heaven's door;

When Fire and Earth and Ocean
Like Titans were engaged
With waves so high that the very sky
Was stricken and enraged;
And the sun was hid by a smoky lid
Where the flame its battle waged.

The cry of the broken world's thunder
Came out of the cataclysm,
And the ash and flame and steam became
Like an infinite rainbow's prism,
And the world's hot heart was torn apart
Underneath the vast abysm,

Till the sea was beaten and humbled
And fled with a baffled roar

In a tidal wave—nevermore to lave
The land it had swept before ;
Back from the mountains it hurled its fountains
And back from this sandy shore !

Now the hills are covered with cattle
And green the grasses grow,
And horses graze in the summer days
On the hills and the vales below ;
Toy rivers run 'neath the summer sun
By a town through the meadow's glow.

But even some fifty years ago
'Twas a very different land,
For even then, say the pioneer men,
The hills were but shifting sand,
In sand-storms' loom as in Ocean's womb
But a flowering, silver strand.

When the clouds of the earthquake vanished,
Then the sun rained down his fire
And the sand grew dry 'neath a burning sky
And wailed to a wind-swept lyre,
Till the sand-storm came and veiled the flame
Of the sun-god's pitiless ire.

High into hills like silver,
Down into blowouts deep,
Winds many-fingered never lingered
But with a mighty sweep
Fashioned the hills where the silvery rills
Of sand no form would keep ;

For the hills were shifting, turning
In a ceaseless ebb and flow,
And the lowly and meek attained the peak
And the mighty were laid low . . .
Thus ages passed before at last
The hills were the hills we know.

But the south-wind brought the dust clouds
To mix with the desert sand
And carried the seeds of the desert weeds,
Cactus and sage, in his hands;
And the rain and snow were like life-blood's flow—
These made the sand-hill land.

Then man came into the sand hills
And the deer before him fled;
The sod house shakes when the blizzard breaks
Or the wind shrieks overhead;
Yet the wild red rose mid the bunch grass grows
And the cattle are sleekly fed.

I think that the great Creator
Spoke in the earthquake's tone;
In the lava flame and the wind He came
To the desert still and lone;
In the flower seed and the grass and weed
We see His work alone.

He has lifted the bed of Ocean
Which man had never seen;
From dead white sand He formed a land
That glitters with new-made sheen.
Is His labor done? It is just begun,
In these hills of the half-starved green!

A MODERN EUCLID

Ah, say not, love, you cannot understand
The beauties of my science. Can you stand
Unmoved before the laws by which He wrought
From chaos, Form, with all Form's beauty fraught?
Form, clothed upon by the Infinities
Of Beauty and of Glory? Lo, 'tis these
I teach, the universal, changeless laws
Of space that ruled e'en ere the Primal Cause
Eternities ago proclaimed them true.
The point, line, surface, solid: are not you,
And all you know and feel, composed of these?
Can laws which formed all beauteous forms displease?
We study God's creation and we see,
Not one alone, but multiplicity
Of universes, intermingled—free—
Each changing momentarily and constantly.
There is a world of Matter. Through the vast
The golden chains of Law have bound it fast.
There is a world of mind—an ethic world,
A universe of feeling. Stars are whirled
And atoms dance within a universe
Conceived as one vast reservoir of force.
There is a universe of life; perchance
Within the stellar spaces life may dance
As on the earth itself. And all that's found
Within these universes still is bound
Beneath the laws of geometric space.
Is not the mind bound in a bony case,
A solid hemi-spheroid which obeys
The geometric laws, as the sun's rays
The shortest distance move through the vast sphere

And give us force, life, all we love and fear,
And show us all the vastness we may see,
And make us all that we may know and be?
I love you . . . 'Tis a line upon my brain!
Joy comes . . . Anon, my being writhes in pain.
I scan star systems of the infinite sky;
I feel sweet memories of days gone by;
I sense the power of the eagle's wings;
A thought comes unto me of heavenly things.
What are they all?—The arcs of an ellipse—
A moving triangle that swiftly clips
A groove upon the curving surface of
A solid, brain. Curved thus, it brings me love.
Another line etched here upon my brain
Will make me laugh or leap or moan in pain.
The lines of this man's brain brought strength and hope.
Lines there have brought that man the gallows-rope . . .
The laws of form. Form dominates all space
Through the infinity of time and place.
Man's mind cannot conceive that formless state
In which these laws would fail to dominate.
Force, changing from the lightning to the light,
To heat, to life, to the soul's zeal for right,
And back to chemic force, to mind that plods
Or soars with aspiration like a God's—
Force acts alone within the bounds of space
Beneath the changeless laws of form and place.
Was even chaos formless one far day?
And is there aught non-spatial? Who can say!
'Tis true that form and space grow ever less
And power more. From space came form; from form
Came Matter, or the ever acting swarm

Of physic-chemic forces; and from these
The vital force of beasts and flowers and trees;
From life unconscious came the conscious mind,
The heart of pity and the soul that's kind,
And Will that seems to write upon the brain
Lines fraught with joy and laughter and with pain.
Perchance some day the soul may so transcend
All space and form that form will have an end
And all the geometric laws will cease
Within a realm of endless love and peace;
Perchance above the human soul may be
That which from form and space is wholly free—
That something inconceivably sublime
That men must ever worship through all time—
As Nature God in Titan and in Thor—
As craftiness and strength in Zeus—or
As righteousness in Jahweh—Love, in Christ.
Not yet has knowledge of these things sufficed
Save but to draw in lines upon the brain
A shadowy rainbow-haven whence all pain
And sorrow flee—a Paradise beyond
This earthly life—a dream most fair and fond.
Perchance even there our thoughts and words and acts
Will still be ruled by geometric facts.
Then scorn not, love, the science that I teach—
That science which, with universal reach,
Creating all the universes known,
Climbs even the footsteps of the Great White Throne.
For lo; these laws are but a portion of
That Power that broods the many worlds above—
That changelessness that rules unchangingly
The storm-tossed waves of Time's eternal sea!

L'ENVOI

This is Faith's age. E'en though on Zeus's head
The thunderbolt descends, though on the grave
Of Aphrodite are the roses spread;
And Beauty walks no more to Lust a slave.
We worship Love. Nay, not the infant god—
The Maker of a universe divine,
Eternal, infinite, the force that trod
On chaos, and from water made the wine
Of human spirit that shall be divine.

For paradise is not within the past
But is to come—when conscience shall refine
And mind shall grow until it come at last
To know the world of mind. 'Tis here today!
The poet's heart and the enlightened mind
May walk Elysian fields, and heroes may
In deeds of selflessness Valhalla find.

And Mars and Thor and Baal pass away.
E'en great Jehovah, as the cruel god
That bade the ancient Israelites to slay
And spare not one, must pass beneath the sod.
With groping hands the race will find the key
Unto the sepulchre where these shall lie.
We do not worship gods of butchery
Nor give them homes within our free blue sky.

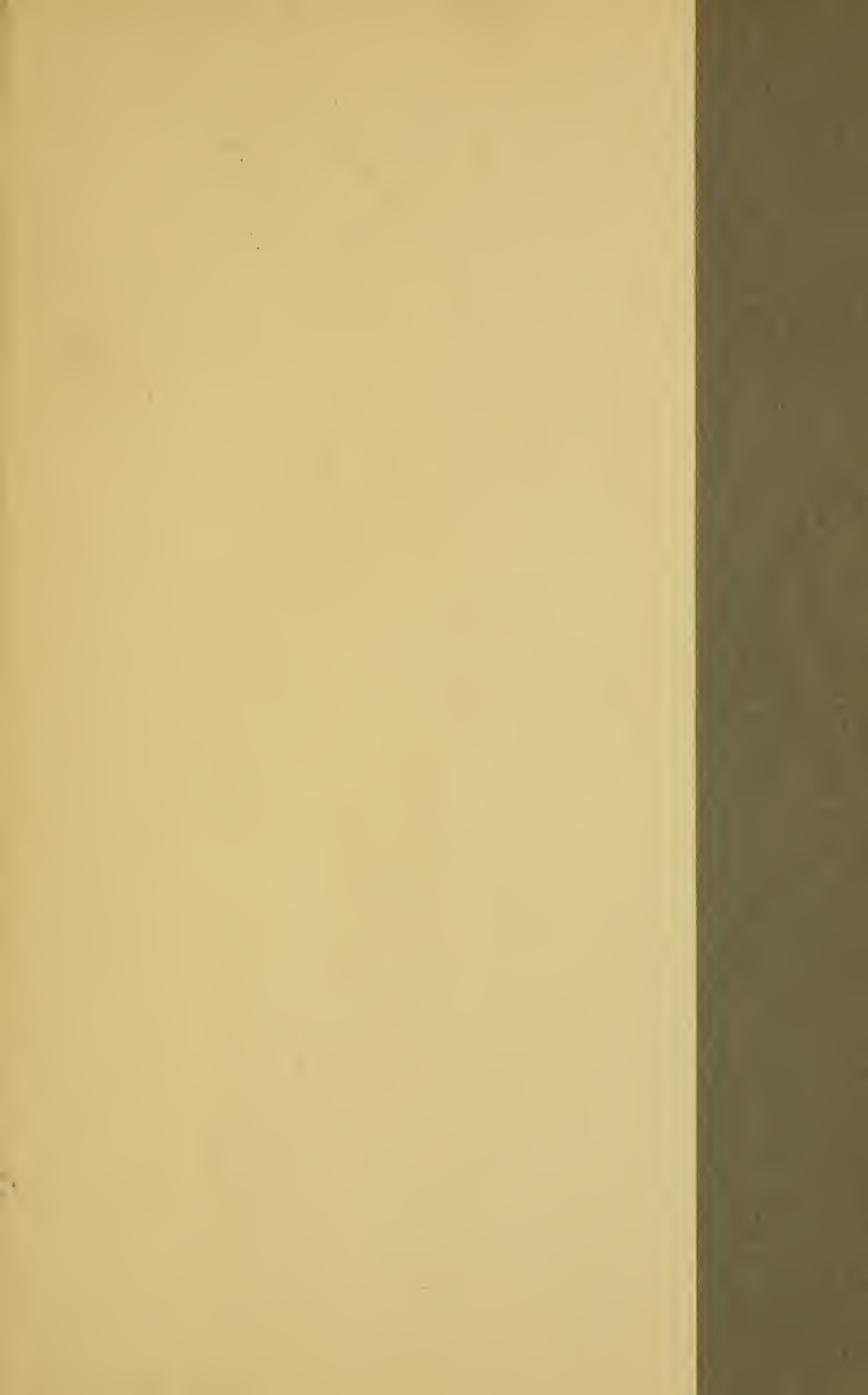
How fair and frail the gods the ancient sees—
Their heaven no higher than an eagle's flight
With rosy Ganymede; their sympathies
No larger than the tribe; their laws of right
No other than the rules of savagery.

O'er great Olympus even men may soar ;
And lo ! the stars' and atoms' harmony
Has drowned Apollo's song forevermore !

Look not unto the childhood of the race
To learn of God ! But go and read earth's tale
Engraven on the mountain's rugged face.
Go learn the book—of love that cannot fail,
That formed from chaos, cosmos ; read how Man,
His love, his mind, his passion, pain, and life,
His beauty and his glory, first began
In protoplasmic slime ; how upward strife
Has ruled all life, and leads men to the height
That has no limit—through the infinite time.
Learn of the atom and the cell, the flight
Of shining suns and worlds with life sublime ;
Know, though the body perish, yet the deed
Shall be immortal. Know the Furies, Fates,
And Nemesis are Law, and give our meed ;
That man's soul lives by loves and dies in hates.

Man's joy is worship. Look up to the blue !
Behold the Infinite of change, and see
That changeless power of love and uplift, through
The ages, that has wrought infinity.
We cannot know the God : we but adore.
The beauty and the glory strike us blind !
Down to your knees, O man, and more and more
The great unknowable shall be divined.

Look ! Beauty, Power, Majesty divine,
Spread o'er the infinite their angel-wings !
Hear ! Cloud and clod, and cell and man and vine,
Atoms and stars, strike Adoration's strings !



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